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March 27, 1976

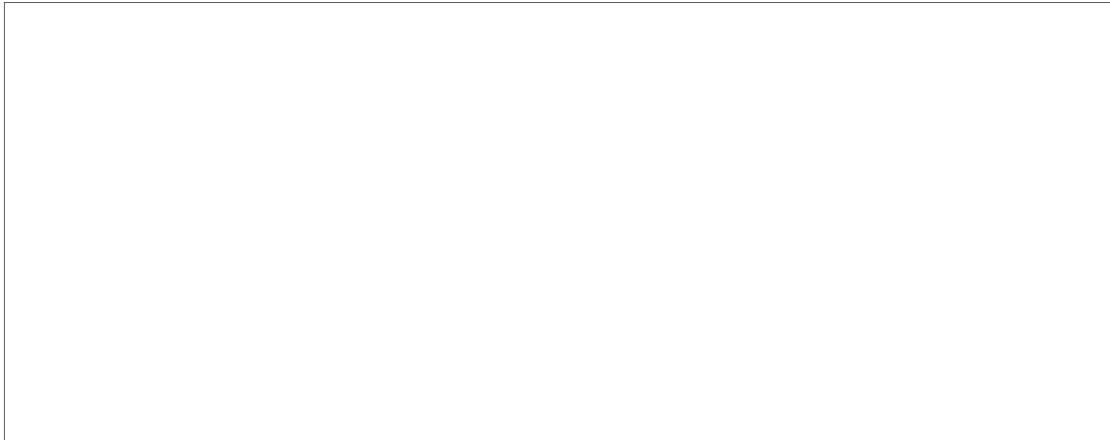
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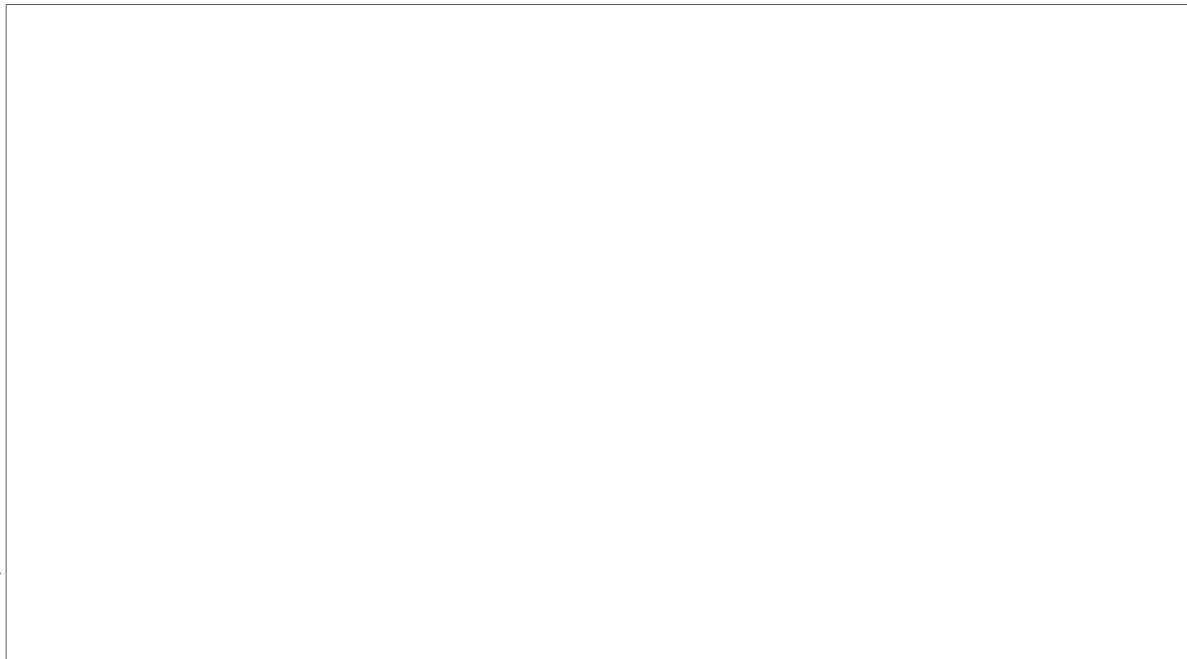
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C O N T E N T S



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ARGENTINA: Military
consolidating control 7



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ARGENTINA

The military government in Argentina is extending and consolidating its control.

The junta has named army Commander Videla as President. A committee of senior officers will advise the President on legislative matters. Officers now occupy the top jobs in all 22 provinces and some local jurisdictions, as well as all federal executive posts. The intended duration of military rule is not clear. An official communique only specified that junta members will not represent their services for more than three years.

A ban on all political activity remains in effect, but only a handful of left-wing splinter parties have actually been disbanded. The Moscow-oriented Communist Party survives. The junta has taken over the administration of the General Confederation of Workers, the principal labor organization, and banned its political affiliate, the so-called 62 Organizations.

The junta has not yet publicly addressed its most pressing problem—the economy. It has said, however, that civilians will be appointed to cabinet posts requiring “unique specialties,” and the Economy Ministry is almost certainly among them. A civilian economist would provide the expertise the military acknowledges it lacks and would act as a lightning rod for criticism of future policies. Jose Martinez de Hoz, an economist and former government official, is the most likely candidate.

Apparently encouraged by the lack of public resistance thus far, the junta is relaxing some of the more obvious controls. The US embassy reports, for example, that roadblocks are now down, airports are operating normally, and censorship of the press has been lifted. The greatest potential for opposition lies with the terrorists, who so far have remained relatively inactive. Labor can also be expected to protest when, as seems likely, the government announces further economic austerity measures. [REDACTED]

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